

IN THE SUBSTITUTE SPECIFICATION

Please cancel paragraphs 002, 013, 014, 021, 031, 040, 051 and 056 of the Substitute Specification. Please replace these cancelled paragraphs with replacement paragraphs, also 002, 013, 014, 021, 031, 040, 051 and 056, as follows.

[002] The present invention is directed to printing blanket units or assemblies of a printing blanket cylinder of a printing press, as well as to methods for producing such a printing blanket assembly. The assemblies include a support plate and a printing blanket. A filler material is arranged on at least one end of the printing blanket assembly.

[013] In accordance with the present invention, this object is attained by the provision of a printing blanket unit for use on a printing blanket cylinder of a rotary printing press. The printing blanket unit has a dimensionally stable support plate and a printing blanket which is fastened on an exterior surface of the support plate. A filler material is arranged on at least one end of the printing blanket support plate and may extend~~extends~~ at least as far as an end~~exterior surface~~ of the printing blanket. This filler material, which is embodied as a support element, extends in a longitudinal direction of the printing blanket on the interior~~outside~~ of the printing blanket and extending longitudinally~~facing~~

away from the support plate. The support plate typically has two folded legs with the filler material being on folds that form the folded legs.

[014] An advantage of the printing blanket unit or assembly in accordance with the present invention lies, in particular, in that by the use of this printing blanket unit or assembly, in which a filler material is arranged in the area of a virtual extension of the exterior of the printing blanket support plate in the longitudinal direction of the printing blanket, a gap between the ends of the printing blanket is minimized. In this connection, it is easily within the scope of the present invention for the protrusion of the filler material to be selected to be so large that, in its installed position, the two ends of the printing blanket come to rest against each other.

[021] In an alternative method in accordance with the present invention, filler material is applied to the support plate, which support plate has at least one folded end and on which support plate the printing blanket has already applied, in the area of the fold of the support plate. This filler material is connected with a front face of the at least one folded end of the support plate.

[031] A portion of the resultant printing blanket unit 01 is shown, in its installed position, in Fig. 3. It can be seen in Fig. 3 that in the installed position, the two support plate legs 04 and 06 extend at complementary angles to, and parallel to each other, so that they can be fastened together in a slit in a printing cylinder, which is not specifically represented. Because of the protrusion of the ends 11 and 12 of the printing blanket 03, a width of the resultant gap 16 between the ends 11 and 12 of the printing blanket 03 is minimized. It is possible, for example, to minimize the width of the gap 16 to a width of less than 0.5 mm.

[040] A third embodiment of a printing blanket unit, in accordance with the present invention, is represented in Fig. 5. This printing blanket unit also has a support plate 18 of sheet steel and a printing blanket 19 of rubber. To produce the printing blanket unit, first the support plate 18 is fastened, by utilization of its legs 21 and 22, on a processing cylinder, whose shape corresponds to the shape of the printing blanket cylinder in the printing press on which the printing blanket unit is ultimately to be fastened. Following this placement, a sealing element 23 is inserted into the gap 26 between the legs 21 and 22 and is used for closing the gap 26 at the bottom of the gap 26. Thereafter, a liquid elastomer material is applied to the outside of the support plate

18 in such a way that the support plate 18 is enclosed in a continuous sub-structure layer 24 of this liquid elastomer. In the area of the oppositely located legs 21 and 22 of the support plate, the sub-structure layer 24 fills the gap 26 which is the space between the oppositely located folds or fold lines or fold zones 27 and 28.

[051] In the state where the printing blanket unit is mounted on the printing blanket cylinder, this thickened end, or both thickened ends extend in a radial direction past a virtual extension of the adjoining rubber blanket. An effective radius of the mounted rubber blanket is thus greater in the area of the ends. The area located in between ~~inbetween~~ is very much larger, and in particular is at ~~is at~~ least ten times greater, than the area of the ends. The thickening preferably extends in the circumferential direction by less than 10 mm, and in particular it extends less than 5 mm.

[056] For producing printing blanket units, with printing blanket units which initially lie stretched out, either preferably flat or slightly arched, the filler material 51, 52, or the support elements 13, 14 ~~are~~ ~~are-is~~ introduced at ends of the printing blanket unit facing away from each other, except for the preferred embodiment of Fig. 5.